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# Shawangunk Mountain Stories



— BY —  
WILHELM BENIGNUS



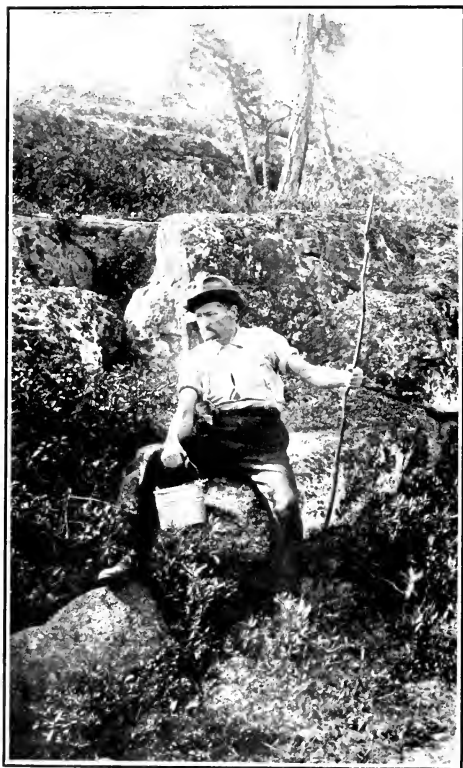
“Shawangunk Mountain Stories” by  
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Das hübsche, mit Naturaufnahmen geschmückte Buch ist in englischer Sprache geschrieben. Es führt uns in die Felsenwildnis der „Shawangunk Berge“ des Staates New York und enthüllt uns in fesselnden Beschreibungen die herrliche, poetische Natur und die wildromantische Schönheit dieser Bergesgegend, deren Seelenstimmungen Benignus mit ganz eigenem Zauber zu bannen und uns vorzuführen verstanden hat.

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WILHELM BENIGNUS.  
Shawangunk Mountains, N. Y., 1915.  
At the Foot of the "Jacob's Ladder", near the New Road to  
Minnewaska.



# Shawangunk Mountain Stories

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By WILHELM BENIGNUS



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WITH JOYOUS VOICE SINGS A NIGHTINGALE.

A Morning Song of the Shawangunks.

With joyous voice sings a nightingale:  
full rich the sounds float away  
and awaken the echoes in glen and dale,  
and she hails the glorious day,  
she hails the day, the glorious day  
and the Queen of the Golden Rays

A fiddler young hears the joyous song:  
he lifts his fiddle to play,  
and a stream of rich melody floats along,  
and he hails the glorious day,  
he hails the day, the glorious day  
and the Queen of the Golden Rays.



TO THE MAN, POET AND LOVER OF NATURE,  
MR. HENRY W. SHOEMAKER.

AUTHOR OF

Argyle Verse, 1898. (Verse.) Editor of  
Immaterial Verses, 1898. (Verse)  
Random Thoughts, 1899. (Verse)  
Wild Life in Central Pennsylvania, 1903.  
Pennsylvania Mountain Stories, 1907  
Pennsylvania Mountain Verses, 1907  
Philosophy of Jake Haiden, 1911. Editor of  
More Pennsylvania Mountain Stories, 1912  
The Indian Steps, 1912  
Tales of the Bald Eagle Mountains, 1912  
Elizabethan Days, 1912. (Verse)  
Susquehanna Legends, 1913  
Stories of Pennsylvania Animals, 1913  
Stories of Great Pennsylvania Hunters, 1913  
In the Seven Mountains, 1914  
The Pennsylvania Lion, 1914  
Wolf Days in Pennsylvania, 1914  
Black Forest Souvenirs, 1914  
Penn's Grandest Cavern, 1915  
Pennsylvania Deer and Their Horns, 1915  
A Pennsylvania Bison Hunt, 1915  
Juniata Memories, 1915,

who, as a Historian, Collector and Recorder of Legends  
and Folk-lore of Central Pennsylvania,

in these his Writings,

has rendered so lovingly, charmingly and  
understandingly

The Sublime Soul and Spirit  
of the

PENNSYLVANIA MOUNTAINS,

these

SHAWANGUNK MOUNTAIN STORIES

are sincerely and respectfully dedicated by the Author.

New York City, May, 1916.





HUCKLEBERRY PICKERS AT THREE-MILE CAMP, AUGUST, 1915. AT THE CAMP FIRE.



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A PEACEFUL SUMMER DAY—GETTING DINNER READY.



## THE CHICKADEES' "GOOD-BYE".

---

CAMPING three miles up the mountain, near Beaver Creek, in the forenoon of Monday, the 10th of August, 1914, I was sitting at my home-made table, amongst the shady trees near my tent, busy writing. It was just as cozy a green corner of the Shawangunk woods as you could wish to be snuggled up in on a hot summer day. The air was close, and its hot breaths full of wood-scents occasionally swept up the valley along the mountain road or welled in waves from the gullies and high-wooded swamps which slope down from the mountain ridge, called "High Point".

The sky was threatening, and giant clouds reared their shining silver heads or stretched out fantastic arms to far distances. So I had decided not to go picking huckleberries on this day, and, besides, as the berries began to be scarce, I had made up my mind to take in hand my pilgrim staff one of the next days and strike out for New York City. The huckleberries, the blue, the black, the grey, the silver, the flesh-colored and the pearl-colored ones, were beginning to get very scarce and only swamp-berries were, to a certain extent, ripe and ready now in certain localities to be gathered by the diligent searchers.

As a forerunner of autumn days, a lonely and early katydid, the night before, had already tried near my tent to drum its well-known tune. Well, it was time

to go soon. Many pickers, single and in family groups, had left already.

So there I sat and mused and wrote a few lines occasionally. In spite of the thunderclouds the sun shone strong and hot. A light breeze came along, swept through the woods and made the leaves of the trees and bushes and the finely feathered high ferns nod and whisper in soft unison. A big black and blue butterfly flapped with shimmering wings gracefully around a high-stemmed, tenderly red-colored flower a few feet from me, rested on the blossoms and sucked with long, flexible tongue sweet nectar from the ever hospitably-open chalice. Peace was here; my soul looked and listened. Silence dreamed its song of meditation, when all at once it seemed to stir and wake to active life with a flutter of wings all around me, and sweet, singing voices of little wilderness-spirits busily gave me friendly greetings. A really agreeable interruption indeed. As I looked up I saw a flock of some dozens of chickadees flying around me, full of curiosity, wondering, perhaps, how I came there, and pondering over my doings. They perched on the branches in my neighborhood with kind and sweet calls of "Chica-dee-ee-ee-ee-ee, chica-dee-ee-ee-ee," and a couple of yellow-breasts watched me curiously amongst the green leaves above, their necks stretched, their little heads bent sideways, listening, and chimed in with a "See-ee-ee-ee-ee," like the ringing and twinkling of fine, clear, pure, little silver bells. Such tunes you hear sometimes, when you listen to the voices of mountain brooks running

valley-wards over glistening pebbles. I sat there quietly without moving. Replying with responding whistling to the birds' notes in their own calls, I received immediate responses with ever kindly "Chica-dee-ee-ee-ees" and silvery "See-ee-ee-ees," and the dear fellows flew around me with a soft rush of wings only a hand broad away, and some of them perched near me at an arm's stretch and sat on the slender branches watching me and listening to my whistling interestedly, ever replying with their own original calls and songs. Without a motion, their wise little heads cocked sideways, their little kindly black eyes shining, watching, listening, observing, some of the chickadees sat there, and all around their quick-silvery companions kept up a lively flying, hopping, twittering and singing. They were really a crowd of kind and consoling wood-folks, of cheering fairy-spirits moved by real interest, by real friendship. About fifteen minutes this kept up. Then I rose, and they flitted away southward, up towards the swamps in the direction of Highpoint, going about their business and their own peculiar errands. But a long while yet could I hear their "Good-bye," sounding fainter and fainter, the kindly and cheery and friendly and sweet "Chica-dee-ee-ee-ee-ee!" and the "See-ee-ee-ee-ee!" pure like the voice of a mountain brook and clear and fine like little, tinkling silver bells.





CASTLE ROCK, or GATE ROCK, in the Foreground to the Left; HIGHPOINT, the Mountain Promontory, in the Distance.





## ELLENVILLE, N. Y., AND KING SHAWANGUNK'S CASTLE.

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**T**WENTY miles west of Kingston-on-the-Hudson, and reached from there in an hour's time by the "New York, Ontario and Western Railroad", the mountain town or village of Ellenville awaits the visitors who long, in the good old summer time, for peace, rest and the enjoyment of fine and romantic mountain scenery.

Ellenville, in Ulster County, N. Y., is charmingly situated in the valley of the Sandburgh Brook, or Creek, which brook, a few miles towards the east, at Napanoch, flows into the Rondout, which in turn flows into the Hudson River. Ellenville snuggles itself to the foot of a high mountain of the range of the "Shawangunk Mountains," which rise quite abruptly to a height of two thousand feet above the narrow plain upon which the village is built. The "Shawangunk Mountains" do not belong to the "Catskills," but are the northernmost promontory of the great range of the "Alleghenies". Opposite the "Shawangunk Range", on the western side of the Sandburg Creek, rises and stretches in undulating, softly contoured lines the range of the "Catskill Mountains," mostly shimmering dreamily in a blue haze, sometimes, in very clear air, showing the peaks like a marvelous chain of cut and polished gems and often, at sunset, bathed in a

glory which holds the soul of man in awe and admiration.

The valley of the Rondout Creek and the Sandburg Creek was settled in pre-Revolutionary times, and the community of Ellenville is old enough to have accumulated a store of traditions running back to the pioneer period, before the Indian occupants had been entirely displaced. Wonderful legends of these times are floating about. Among these traditions are many relating to the finding of metals, precious and otherwise, in the neighboring mountains.

Ellenville has many points of interest. So the famous Sun-Ray Springs, belonging to the "Sun-Ray Company", and the factory buildings of the "Ulster County Knife Company".

Many of the inhabitants of the peaceful mountain town are not specially blessed with an overflow of earthly riches. So they accept gladly and thankfully the liberal hospitality of the ancient Spirit of the Mountain, "King Shawangunk", and they swarm like busy bees over the tops of the mountains in the months of July and August, and gather the fine huckleberries, thus making some welcome extra dollars to tide them over the hard times.

The new mountain road, built 1914 by Mr. Smiley—who himself commenced as an Ellenville boy, and now, by his thrift and work, owns the finest and largest hotels on the mountain—begins at the old lead or zinc mine (now out of use) at the foot of the mountain and leads up to its side in winding curves, past boulder-

strewn, brush-covered, thickly-wooded wilderness, with occasional views towards the Catskills. Three miles up it runs level again. There Beaver Creek crosses the road and flows down the mountain side to the valley. There the romantic wilderness of the "Jacob's Ladder" begins, with its gullies and swamps and rock-bastions and its patches of huckleberries. One mile farther on is "Four-mile Camp", where generally about twenty or thirty pickers camp and where John Wood, an old and experienced mountaineer, has a little hut and buys huckleberries from the pickers. A mile further on is "Five-mile Camp", where usually about one hundred and fifty huckleberry pickers are camping, single persons and large families. From there the road leads to Awosting, Minnewaska and New Paltz, to the big mountain lakes: Maratansa, Binnewater, Awosting, or Long Pond, Minnewaska and Lake Mohonk. Celebrated mountain hotels for summer and winter guests are the "Wildemere Hotel" and the "Cliff Hotel" on Minnewaska Lake, and the "Lake Mohonk Mountain Hotel" on Lake Mohonk. Along the way, up on the mountain from Three-mile Camp to Five-mile Camp, you can look across the Rondout Valley and have the Catskills spread before you in beautiful vistas of glorious peaks, of wooded mountains, brooks and lakes. Four miles across the mountain top is Sam's Point, 2,340 feet above sea level. Around there are the largest picker-camps of many hundred people.

In the summer of the year 1914 I camped at "Three-mile Camp", near Beaver Creek. If you look up just

before reaching the creek, you see, to the right, the rocks looming up like towering fortresses. I noticed high up on the rocks a portal-like upright giant slab, which, when the sun shone upon it, looked like the closed entrance to a mountain castle. I call it the "Gate Rock" or "Castle Rock". This gate I entered. How, I cannot tell, but the reader may fancy how.

Steps of snow-white quartz led up the now wide-open portal. Old "King Shawangunk", his beautiful daughter "Minnewah" at his side, and with him his countless retinue of Indian warriors proud and noble, led by the great chief "Tecumseh", welcomed me cordially and entertained me royally. Good things we had, and good talks. Too long would it take to write of it all. I shall only record here two sayings of the chief spirits of the mountain.

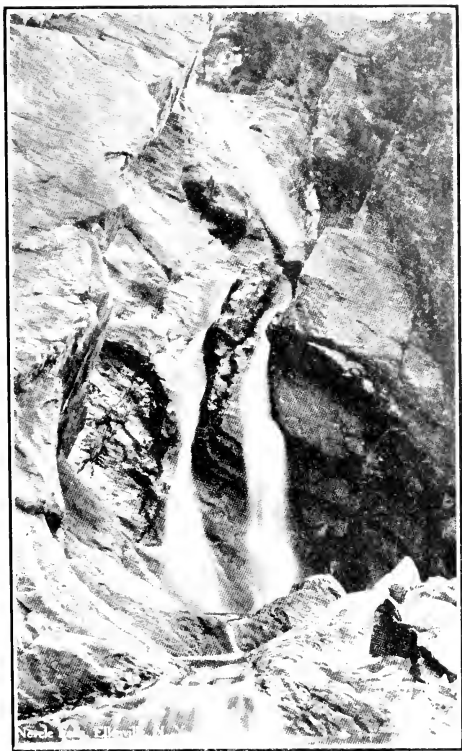
Thus "King Shawangunk" spoke: "The world wants to know of the man who can do things. It does not want to know of him who can explain why he cannot do them. \* \* \* If they hope and believe, the deaf shall hear, the blind shall see, the mute shall speak. \* \* \* Keep your soul pure as the mountain brook. Be true and fearless. \* \* \* Truth and Light are one; open your ears and you hear them; open your eyes and you see them; guard your steps; speak with the voice of your conscience, and the Great Spirit is with you."

Chief "Tecumseh's" words ran thus: "An Indian and a white man sat on a log. The Indian pushed against the white man and continued pushing till the

white man fell off the log. In surprise and anger the white man asked: 'Why did you do this?' The Indian replied: 'That is the way you pale-faces pushed us off our possessions and stole and kept our lands. First we, in great kindness, gave you a piece of land to live on, then you wanted more, and we gave you more for the sake of peace; but you were not satisfied and wanted still more, and at last you took all we had. Thus the pale-face robbed the red man and made him homeless'."







NEVELE FALLS, ELLENVILLE, N. Y.





## THE MOUNTAIN AND THE CLOUD.

### A Shawangunk Mountain Story, Dedicated to the Memory of an Ellenville Poet.

By Wilhelm Benignus.

LIFE is one grand song, one grand poem—a sacred hymn, a sublime and majestic ode, an impassioned rhapsody. Nature writes the stanzas and sings them to the harp of the winds and waters. In nature God is embodied, the Great Spirit. With His voice nature speaks and gives most wonderful revelations.

In solitude you gain knowledge. Rocks, trees, plants, animals, yourself, God—all are of one family. Each day rises resplendent as a new wonder and freely presents to you new riches, and you gather for your inner life imperishable treasures. Your spirit mounts on the wings of light and your soul chimes jubilantly in the rhapsody of creation. To this song of nature I often listened in camp near Beaver Creek, where my tent was pitched in a green wilderness of trees, bushes, bracken brake ferns, sweet ferns and mountain laurels, which just left a big patch of sky visible overhead. There Beaver Creek hurried downhill toward the Sandburg Valley in foaming and pearly cascades, and the bed the busy waters have burrowed as their runway forms a deep, thickly wooded gully, which is called "Witches' Hole." This is the wildest part of the mountains. A silver mine is hidden there, which

is yet to be found. A giant hemlock tree stands there, over one hundred feet high; also giant pitch pines. In the hiding places of "Witches' Hole" the wild animals of the woods make their homes: porcupines, raccoons, woodchucks, squirrels, rabbits, foxes and many others, which have often been my nightly visitors around the tent. In the hollow trunks of trees swarms of wild bees have their hives. Rattlesnakes and copperheads are lively around there, too. We killed several of them near our tents, not far down the road at Rickety Spring and on the "Jacob's Ladder." When the shadows of night fall the calls of the whip-poor-will, that haunts "Witches' Hole" and has its nest there, rings through the woods: "Whip-poor-will! Whip-poor-will! Whip-poor-will!"

When around and over my tent the storm roared and the voices of the woods and waters, down from the "Jacob's Ladder" and Highpoint, and up from the deep and wild ravine of "Witches' Hole," joined in a mighty chorus, I am sure the spirits of the old Indian hunters and warriors who once roamed over these mountain wildernesses were awake and alive and a-wandering. And there came into my mind the immortal lines from "Evangeline", a tale of Arcadie, of the bard Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

"This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and  
the hemlocks  
bearded with moss, and in garments green, indistinct in  
the twilight,  
stand like Druids of old, with voices sad and prophetic,  
stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on their  
bosoms.

Loud from its rocky caverns, the deep voiced neighboring ocean  
speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail of  
the forest.  
This is the forest primeval; but where are the hearts that  
beneath it  
leaped like the roe, when he hears in the woodland the  
voice of the huntsman?"

And I thought of a poet friend who lived in Ellenville in the first decade of this twentieth century, and there wrote his book of perfect poems, "The Strife of Life"; of the late pastor of the Ellenville Evangelical Lutheran Church on Centre Street—Dr. Gotthold August Neeff. He died in Utica, N. Y., and there rests with his wife Sophie, who followed him soon.

If you stand in Ellenville on a fine summer day, when the wind is high and the white clouds are sailing in the sky, and watch the cloud-shadows fleeing up the green-billowed mountain sides, you will understand what Neeff meant with his poem:

#### TO THE CLOUD.

"O shadow of the cloud, do let me flee high up the mountain  
and its meadows green;  
high up, high up, beyond the dark ravine;  
O let me flee, and let me fly with thee!"

"O silvery cloud, do let me flee with thee and with thine  
shadows' changing tourmaline,  
O let me flee with thee, where thou hast been,  
and spread my wings high o'er the mountain-tree.

"O let me spread my soul, where thou dost flee,  
and dreaming, lose myself in opal air.  
O hast'ning cloud, do let me flee with thee.

"O let me flee as swift as thou dost flee,  
that to the cloud my soul be married there,  
O let this restless, dreaming shadow flee!"

Neeff called this poem a "sound poem". His soul is married to the white cloud now. In realms of peace he dwells, but even from there his spirit fights the battles for Truth, Right and Light. His spirit was and is a batteler-spirit.

Well, let the shadows flee and be gone. O glorious sun, thou golden goddess of the sky, gladden our hearts with thine rays! Let us have sunshine! 'This life is good to live! Really. Let us make it worth while to live!

This life, I think, is all right, friend, and not so bad indeed. There is a thorn to ev'ry rose, but ain't the roses sweet?

Say, ain't the roses sweet?



## THE SPIRIT LAKE.

---

ON "Shawangunk Mountain" is a lake where every twenty-five years on a certain summer night a ghostly procession of spirits can be seen by privileged eyes. The full moon sheds its silvery light, strange and fantastic shadows weave and waver, the winds are hushed and silent, the mirror of the lake is smooth and motionless while the spirits walk around the shimmering waters three times and whisper and sigh and sing softly. If you listen closely you can hear them sing this

### SONG OF LOST LOVE.

"True love flows deep as a river flows, but love means many a thing!

It can be compared to a floating rose which the waves to the deep sea swing.

"Love leads you sometimes to sunlit skies where in glory redeemed souls dwell;

it brings you to regions where pain-wrung cries of lost souls ring through hell.

"The dewdrop trembles, a sparkling gem, in the purple flower's chalice,

and a sunbeam, which from heaven came, drinks it hotly —that's love!—with a kiss.

"But the love that alone will a long time last I compare to a crystal lake,

wherein purest pearls of a happy past their rest at the bottom take.

"And a shimmer deep down from its golden sands meets fondly the soft moonbeams,

while with lilies white in their spirit hands on the shore walk our wishes and dreams.

"And their eyes are turned with a sudden start to the treasures there hidden long,

and they sing, with sighs that could break your heart, of lost love, a sad, sad song."





MY TENT NEAR BEAVER CREEK—JULY AND AUGUST, 1915.





## TECUMSEH AND FLEET WIND.

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### Story of the Great Indian Chief and His War Horse.

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A LITTLE over half-way up the path to Highpoint—which starts on the new road a few hundred feet below Rickety Spring and when you can see Highpoint well ahead of you—strike out to the right, towards the west, and you will find a pair of white giant-rocks standing neighborly together. One of them shows the strong, grim, determined features of an Indian warrior—this is "Great Chief Tecumseh". The other rock, southward, has the form of a horse—this is the chief's war horse, "Fleet Wind". Between the two rocks lay some big slabs which look like a shield and a tomahawk. On many a sun-hot summer day I picked various kinds of huckleberries near these rocks, and always found plenty. Their different colors are astonishing and wonderful; some are coal-black, some are dark-blue, some are sky-blue, others pearl-gray or flesh-colored, and each kind has a different and enticingly delicious taste. Sometimes a crowd of pickers approached noisily and disturbed the solitude, but mostly I was alone in the peace and poetry of this Shawangunk wilderness. Annoying were only the myriads of bloodthirsty little flies which appeared in these latter years and which seem to take a special pleasure in bothering you constantly. They seem to

think your eyes and ears are fine places to fly into. Often I noticed a wild hawk sailing in keen curves in the azure sky like the bold spirit of the old warrior himself. And the old rattlesnake that lives under the rocks gave me a sign of its existence by the unforgettable pungent odor it emitted in anger and fear when it fled from the presence of the intruder of its domain. It was as honest in its warning as the old chief himself ("Tecumseh" means "rattlesnake") who hated the palefaces, but always fought them honestly and fairly. There he stands.

"GREAT CHIEF TECUMSEH", WITH HIS WAR HORSE  
"FLEET WIND".

Turned into the stone the warrior bold,  
the Great Chief Tecumseh,  
waits for the promised "Age of Gold",  
when wrong no more shall be.

His mighty shield lays close by him,  
his heavy tomahawk;  
high in the blue, where white clouds swim,  
his spirit sails, a hawk.

Fleet Wind, the war horse, by his side,  
fast like the wind did seem. . . . .  
Brave deeds and many a fierce fight  
flit through the warrior's dream.

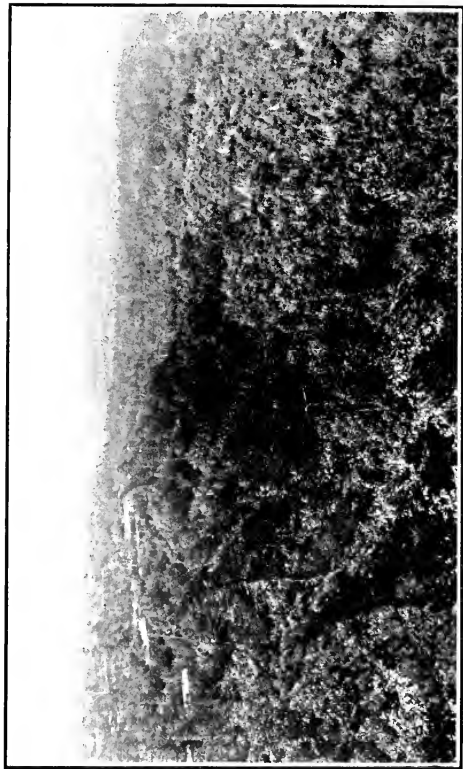
Stern like the rock the hero stands and dreams, the Great Chief Tecumseh. Nobly he lived and bravely he fought and died to free his wronged people from the yoke of the palefaced robbers and oppressors. He sleeps and dreams. But one night of the year he wakes to life. This night, a late summer night, is preceded by a brooding hot day on which heavy gray-black clouds with threatening thunder-heads loom up on the horizon.

Suddenly the trees and bushes of the forest raise a chorus of sound as a strong wind arises and drives the clouds before him like a shepherd his flock. With a peculiar restlessness these clouds, in solid ranks, roll up from the region of the Catskills and from the direction of the Alleghenies and from the Hudson River country, and, grumbling like angry bears, they shift and move in ever-changing shapes around and around the Highpoint flats. Occasionally, like a warning, heavy raindrops fall. When the pitch-dark night sets in the cloud-armies clash together and their masses burst asunder amid mighty roars of thunder and blinding flashes of blue lightning. Here and there the fiery shafts strike big forest trees which sink to the ground with a crash, struck to the heart and splintered to matchwood. Hell seems loose. The elements wrestle tumultuously, and the forests sigh and moan under the merciless whippings and lashings of howling tempest and hissing rain. The creeks swell over their borders, and, bellowing like fiends, they rush and rumble and thunder in raging torrents down the mountains.

Then Great Chief Tecumseh stirs to life, grasps his shield and tomahawk, mounts his war horse Fleet Wind, and sends out a ringing yell, and his warriors assemble around him, strong and brave and fierce, and they war in the battle of the clouds and winds, and they hunt over the mountain territory, and their shrill cries wake the echoes in forest and glen:

“Yoo-hoo-oo-oo-ee-ee-ee!  
Yoo-hoo-oo-oo-ee-ee-ee!  
Yoo-hee-ee-ee! Ee-ee-ee!”





HIGHPOINT, IN THE DISTANCE; CASTLE ROCK OR GATE  
ROCK, TO THE LEFT.



## THE PATH TO HIGHPOINT.

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### The Story of a Solitary Climb Up the Rocky Mountainside.

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THE new road to Minnewaska, built by Mr. Smiley, commences where the old zinc mine stands at the foot of the mountain. In winding curves the road leads up the rocky, thickly-wooded mountainside and offers, higher up, beautiful views of the Catskills across the valley. At three different places, each about a mile distant from the other, cool, clear water from the mountain springs refreshes the traveler. The last of these drinking places is Rickety Spring, three miles up the mountain. The water runs strongly through an iron pipe into a trough; you have to look out there for rattlesnakes. About ten minutes farther up is Beaver Creek, flowing under a wooden bridge built over the road. The water of this creek is pure and good to drink.

Up this new road about two and three-quarter miles from Ellenville, a sign at the right side reads: "To Highpoint". From there the path to Highpoint leads southward up the mountain. This is an old Indian path and is much used by the huckleberry pickers, for around Highpoint and the Ice Cave, to which another path branches off to the right, are the best berry grounds. The distance from the new road to Highpoint is a little over a mile.

Highpoint is a mountain promontory from which a wide view over the surrounding mountain country opens. So the government built a hut up there, fitted it out with a telephone, and put it in charge of a warden, who looks out for forest fires, which happen sometimes and rage fiercely. Huckleberry plants want space to grow; their growth is hindered by close-growing ferns, trees and bushes, which at the beginning of this rocky Highpoint path are especially thick. Higher up there are free spaces; the vista opens and you see Highpoint ahead. To the right and to the left of the path you find wonderful berries, especially where fires have left the blackened trunks and stumps of pitch-pines. Such ground is called "burned ground" and the huckleberries grow there astonishingly fine. These berries do not respond to culture; they are wild and love ground which holds much acid. Not far from Highpoint, to the left of the path, you find in the hot weather a welcome good water to slake your thirst at the so-called Mud Spring. Beware of rattlesnakes there, too; also farther up at the rocks.

In this blessed solitude of the regions near the path I picked berries often, all by myself, and found regular fairy spots. There the "hair cap moss", like myriads of green stars, grows along the rock crevices. The golden sunbeams play around you, God's sunshine warms your heart, and you see the beauty, the wonders of this mountain world as in transfiguration. The pure, fresh mountain air caresses you, and the healthy wood-smells please your nostrils, and the huckleberries



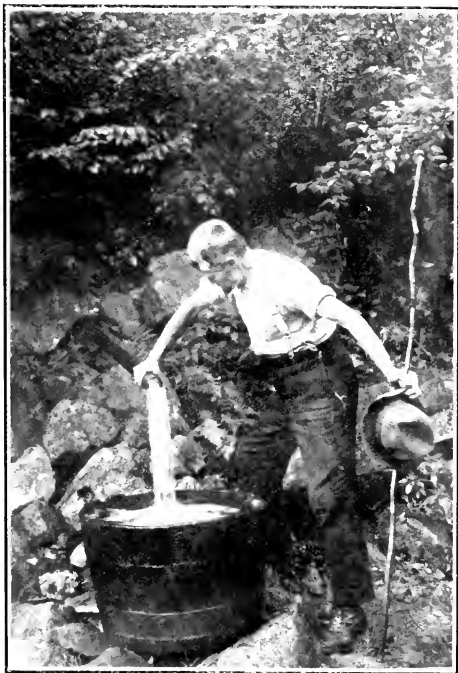
taste luscious. The strength of the towering rocks enters your being, and a new will to live and to do pervades you and lifts your spirit.

Enclosed by the brown wilderness these mossy berry spots look like fairy grounds transplanted from a far wonderland. In these solitudes your soul can dive into the deepest seas of meditation and gather and bring to light most precious pearls of thought and pure desire.

Not even there you are quite so lonesome, for, like comrade spirits, the black, white and chestnut-red chewinks cheer you up with their call, "Chewink"! or start a short song for you that sounds in words like "Chuck-berries-pick-I-will-I-will."







"RICKETY SPRING" WATER.  
At the New Road, below Three Mile Camp.



## CLOUSBURST AT ELLENVILLE.

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OUR camping and huckleberry picking on Shawangunk Mountain in the month of July and August, 1915, was, to condense it in a short word, "wet". It rained once steadily during a whole week. On the side of my tent toward the new road a brook began to form; on the other side of the tent the water flowed strongly, and in the middle of my tent a spring welled up, for which I dug a trench so the water could pass out through the tent opening. A regular swamp formed itself in front, and I carried stones together and placed them about, so I could step around and do my cooking dry footed. Although I did not object to the "Well of the Seven Muses" in my dwelling—it was so altogether original and unexpected—yet the water all around and all over was a little too much to suit my fancy; so I broke camp and left the mountain the middle of August. If I had stayed till the cloudburst came, August the 22d, my tent would have been swept away by the flood rushing down to the valley. Of that time I give account as I heard it from a picker who stayed up there, and as I read it in the newspapers.

Never before had Ellenville passed through such an ordeal as the cloudburst and the electric storm of that singular August day brought along. Torrential rain flooded towns in two New York counties, and villages in Sullivan County suffered greatly. The cloudburst tore out part of the tracks of the New

York, Ontario and Western Railroad, destroyed sections of the State road and of many mountain roads, ripped away bridges and ruined crops, and the electric storm started fires and added to the people's terror.

This is the story of the cloudburst and flood that visited Ellenville, Ulster County, N. Y., on the memorable day, August the 22d, 1915:

Mountain streams, already dangerously swollen from a week of heavy rains, broke their bounds in the afternoon during a heavy cloudburst that deluged parts of Sullivan and Ulster Counties, sent mud slides thundering down mountainsides, ripped out railroad tracks, broke dams and tore away houses.

No loss of life was reported, though there were many thrilling rescues and a large amount of property damage, particularly in rural districts and in villages at the foot of the great hills.

#### **PART OF ELLENVILLE WIPED OUT.**

Ellenville, in Ulster County, snuggled in a basin that is rimmed about by peaks of the Shawangunk range, suffered most. A section of the village was wiped out by the mountain torrent when the dam at the head of the reservoir burst. The higher section of the village escaped the devastation of the torrent.

Another dam collapsed at Napanoch, in Ulster County, shutting off the water supply from the Eastern Reformatory.

At Parksville, in Sullivan County, the cloudburst did severe damage, ripping out a large section of the New York, Ontario and Western Railroad tracks.

The severest electrical storm seen in the Shawangunk and Catskill Mountains for years followed the cloudburst, terrorizing the townsfolk as it flashed and flared amid deafening thunder, and setting two fires at Ellenville while that village was still panic-stricken at the whirling flood tearing at the foundations of houses.

#### DAMAGE TO CROPS IS HEAVY.

No estimate to the damage could be obtained, but farmers for many miles about the villages which were the storm centers were reporting severe crop losses up to the time, late last evening, when the telephone wires began to suffer from the storm and communication was interrupted in many directions.

A curious feature of the deluge at Ellenville was that the rainfall seemed to be mostly upon the tops of the mountains about the village. For half an hour the rain in seemingly solid sheets volleyed down upon the mountains. Sandburg Brook, which flows through the heart of the village, was already badly swollen. Anxious townspeople gathered along its banks as torrents came down the mountainsides, where ordinarily only rivulets trickle into the brook.

Another fifteen minutes and it became apparent that the stout dam which holds back the brook from the reservoir which supplies Ellenville with drinking water was being badly strained. Helpless, the villagers gathered at that point until wiser heads ordered them to higher ground.

### WALL OF WATER SWEEPS INTO VILLAGE.

Before all were safely away there was a ripping, crushing noise and the crumpled dam was buried beneath a wall of water that swept down into the village.

In a moment the New York, Ontario and Western station and yards were islanded in a lake six feet deep. Small frame houses in the neighborhood were stoop high in the flood, and foundations were being loosened on all sides.

The first driving rush of water tore out five hundred feet of railroad tracks along the Ellenville Branch, starting at the railroad station.

All through the village the Sandburg Brook was climbing over its banks. For a few minutes it looked as though the whole town would go, and those on the higher ground thought only of their own danger.

Then, as they perceived that the main section of the town was safe unless the cloudburst lasted for hours, they bethought themselves of those in the houses in the lower section about the railroad station.

### CRY FROM HOUSES FOR HELP.

Half a dozen men launched a boat far up Sandburg Creek and worked their way slowly against the terrific current back toward its source, and the broken dam. Here and there a man or woman, marooned in a house, was crying for help and holding out imploring arms to the slowly moving rescuers.

One after another four frame houses slipped about on their foundations, then were ripped away and



floated out on the raging stream. From all of them the occupants had escaped at the first shouted warning before the dam burst.

In the confusion caused by the tearing away of the houses, which made a dangerous impediment to the progress of the rescue boat, the men in it had to abandon their attempts to get at those still in danger.

But the force of the torrent soon lessened and the remaining houses seemed safe on their foundations.

With great peril to themselves the boatmen reached two women on the roof of a one-story house. They took them into the boat and worked their perilous way across the stream to the shore.

#### **TAKE TWO MEN FROM HOusetop.**

Back they came, guiding their craft slowly to two men who were on the roof of another shaking dwelling. Thus the flood raged, and for long years it will be remembered.

#### **HOW TO REACH ELLENVILLE AND ITS MOUNTAIN, "OLD SHAWANGUNK".**

If you start from New York City, the most enjoyable trip can be made by steaming up the Hudson River to Kingston Point, also called Rondout Landing, with any one of the palatial steamers of the Hudson River Day Line Company. These steamers run in full daylight and offer the best views of the beautiful Hudson River scenery. They are in service from May 1 till the end of October, making return trips between New York and Albany daily, except Sundays,

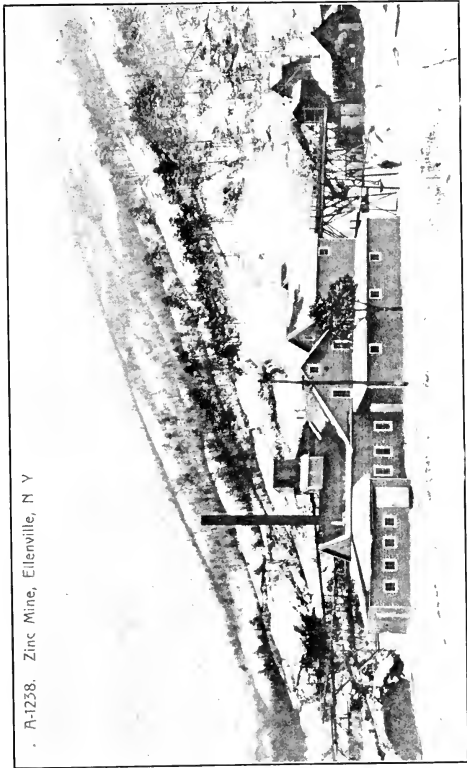
and stopping at Yonkers, West Point, Newburgh, Poughkeepsie, Kingston Point, Catskill, Hudson and Albany. For information, time-tables, etc., etc., address the Hudson River Day Line Company, Desbrosses Street Pier, New York City.

From Kingston Point, or Rondout Landing, the electric cars take the travelers through the streets of Kingston, uphill, and bring him in ten minutes to the Kingston terminal of the New York, Ontario and Western Railway, where trains leave regularly for Ellenville and bring you there in an hour's time. In Ellenville good hotels and boarding houses offer every possible comfort to the travelers.

Ellenville is reached directly over the Ontario and Western Railroad, stations in New York City at foot of West Forty-second Street and Cortlandt Street. Four through trains run each way daily. Fare, \$2.01. Connection is also made by the Port Jervis and Kingston Division of the Ontario and Western Railroad at Port Jervis, and with the New York Central, West Shore and Ulster and Delaware and with the Hudson River boats at Kingston.



A-1238. Zinc Mine, Ellenville, N Y



THE OLD ZINC MINE, ELLENVILLE, N. Y.  
At the Foot of the Mountain, where the New Road commences that leads up to Highpoint,  
the "Jacob's Ladder" and Minnewaska.















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